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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 005002

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DEPT FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A. CG CJTF-76 POLAD

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT KARZAI ON THE CROSS-BORDER JIRGA PROCESS

REF: KABUL 4990

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. R. Norland, for Reasons 1.4 (B)  
AND (D)

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (C) President Karzai met with Charge and UN SRSG Tom Koenigs late on October 12 to outline his latest thinking on the cross-border jirgas which were agreed to during the September 27 trilateral meeting with President Bush. Karzai's outline tracked that provided by his NSA Dr. Zalmay Rasool (Ref) on key elements, including that there should be one agenda item: mobilizing civil society (in Karzai's mind this means moderate tribal authorities) against terrorism. The goal would be an end to actions (he mentioned sanctuary) that support it. Karzai also agreed that the jirgas' participants (he mentioned numbers between 350 and 800) should be drawn from tribal, parliamentary, provincial, and other social groups and should reflect a national rather than simply regional constituency. Even more than Rasool, Karzai underlined the need for the international community (specifically the U.S. and the UN) to be involved in the pre-jirga organization and selection process to ensure the parallelism of the Afghan and Pakistani events in terms of membership and agenda. "You are needed to keep it honest." Karzai mentioned several names he is considering to chair Afghanistan's planning committee and serve as POC. The names include Parliamentary Secretary Farook Wardak (acceptable in Embassy and UNAMA's view) and Sayyaf (not acceptable).

¶2. (C) Karzai confirmed he is looking for dates in late November or early December if possible, and that the likely sites would be Kandahar and Peshawar or, alternatively, Jelalabad and Quetta. He was adamant that the first must be held in Afghanistan. Karzai's outline differed from that of Rasool in that the president said he would be willing to allow the jirgas go on longer than two days. He also favors having all participants from both sides -- not just President Musharraf and himself or selected representatives -- attend both jirgas. The idea, said Karzai, is to draw into the process those responsible for or who are supporting or

allowing the cross border violence to continue and then holding them publicly accountable. End Summary.

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One Agenda Item: Ending Support for Terrorism  
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¶3. (C) President Karzai met late October 12 with UN SRSG Tom Koenigs, Charge, D/SRSG Chris Alexander, and PolCouns to outline his objectives for and ideas regarding the organization of the cross-border jirgas he and President Musharraf had agreed to in their September 27 meeting with President Bush. Karzai emphasized that, in his view, there should be only one agenda item: security, meaning ending terrorism in the region. This is the issue people are thinking about, and it is what they expect from the jirgas, he said. "It is what they want." Pressed by Alexander to consider related issues, including narcotics, schools, and good governance, Karzai was adamant. Those are internal issues, he said; "the one issue that needs to be addressed is sanctuary, security in the region, and the fight against terrorism."

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Planning; Candidates to lead Afghan Efforts  
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¶4. (C) Karzai underlined his expectation that a small joint bilateral planning committee be formed with a mandate to fix the agenda and arrange that the two jirgas be parallel in participation and organization. This parallelism would be necessary to facilitate meaningful dialogue. The joint bilateral committee would have to deal with contentious

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issues, and the international community (he specified the U.S. and UN) would have to be involved actively to keep the process moving and the decisions "honest." Karzai added that he was sure Musharraf will resist the idea of a joint committee. Even if he does agree to that, he will likely resist international involvement and oversight.

¶5. (C) Outlining the qualities he will be looking for in the individual he names to serve as Afghan POC for the planning process (and senior Afghan member of a bilateral planning committee), Karzai stressed the importance of "cleverness," knowledge of the regional dynamics, and credibility among all Afghans. The person would not have to be a Pashtun, though it might be helpful. He mentioned Mohaqaq (a Hazara) first, and then Wolesi Jirga Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Professor Sayyaf. Parliamentary Secretary Farook Wardak was next on the list, with Shinwari, the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as a fourth possibility. SRSG Koenigs and Charge commented that Sayyaf (a former Jihadi commander, with serious human rights liabilities) would be very controversial and would likely not project the image to the international community that would benefit Afghanistan or Karzai. (Comment: Karzai seemed to be looking to us for support for naming Farook Wardak, and indeed he would be an excellent choice. We will reinforce objections to Sayyaf. End Comment)

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Participation  
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¶6. (C) Despite the single, regional focus of the agenda, Karzai said it was important for there to be national representation in both jirgas. The problem of terrorism is national, and all groups and regions should be involved in the discussion. This would be natural for the Afghans, all of whom are affected, but something Karzai anticipates Musharraf will resist. According to Karzai, this would be because national involvement would make it harder for Masharraf to exclude the "seculars or moderates" (including Pashtun elders who have been driven from the border region) who might not follow his line. Karzai was determined,

however, saying that, if the exercise was to have credibility, it is essential that both jirgas include wide and diverse voices. "What matters is what happens in the two tents." He expressed certainty that, if the events are organized correctly, "the mullahs will stand up," and the needed decisions will be made.

¶7. (C) According to Karzai, Afghan participants would be drawn from parliamentarians (the leadership and heads of committees are likely), heads of provincial councils, religious leaders, tribal leaders, and civil society/NGOs. "For the first time in history," he claimed, there would be women named as participants in tribal jirgas. He was unclear about the total number that would participate -- ending up saying it would probably be somewhere between 500 and 800 on each side.

¶8. (C) Karzai added a detail on participation which Rasool had not mentioned two days earlier (Ref) -- that not just the two presidents, but all of the Afghan and all of the Pakistani participants would attend both jirgas. This would reinforce the unity of the agenda and reinforce the credibility of the outcomes. Karzai agreed with Rasool in saying the international community should attend as observers/monitors. He also said he would welcome live press coverage. The presidents might be present for the duration of each jirga, or they might stay for only part.

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Location and Timing: Afghan Jirga Comes First  
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¶9. (C) Karzai confirmed Rasool's view that the best locations would be Kandahar and Peshawar or, alternatively, Jalalabad and Quetta. He said he would like to aim for dates in late November or early December for the two jirgas, if

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possible. Unlike Rasool, Karzai is prepared to let the jirgas extend beyond two days. Confident that the jirgas (if participation and organization is right) will come to the right conclusion, Karzai's view was "let them talk." The president was adamant, however, that the jirga in Afghanistan would be held first.

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Comment  
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¶10. (C) Karzai has a clear idea of what he wants the outcome of the jirgas to be and how the jirgas must function to gain those results. Knowing Musharraf has his own ideas, Karzai welcomed the opportunity to lay out his plan and lobby for support. When SRSG Koenigs described Karzai's expectations as "ambitious," Karzai shot back "that's the whole purpose." He argued that the only way to put an end to the terrorism stemming from the region is to create a forum where there is "public debate" -- where it is possible to "confront publicly, face to face, and face down those behind the violence and terrorism. If this is done, the elders, supported by the people, will stand up against it."

¶11. (C) Karzai understands Musharraf's goals and plan are not the same as his -- and that preparations and organization may well determine whose model prevails in the jirgas. He is approaching the decisions on timing, participation, and agenda like a chess player who senses an opportunity, but he is keenly aware of Musharraf's strengths and the traps that lie ahead. Karzai is counting on U.S. and UN involvement in the planning process to help him avoid being outmaneuvered.

¶12. (C) More broadly, clearly energized by his trip to Washington, Karzai signaled that he senses the time is ripe for a change in the political tide in Afghanistan. He volunteered that his skepticism about the wisdom of hard-hitting military campaigns against the insurgency had

been misplaced. "I was wrong about their likely effect on Afghan public opinion; they have in fact raised hopes (that something can be done about terrorism)." He added that people are looking to him to follow through on the political front to address the cross-border causes of the violence Afghans are enduring. He welcomed the opportunity to lay out his plans for doing so through the cross-border jirgas and promised to consult at each step of the way. End Comment  
NORLAND